

# Correlation Study of Urban Sculpture Planning on Sustainable Development of China's City Sculpture

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## Abstract

In recent years, planning work on urban sculptures has been rolled out consecutively among Chinese medium and large cities in light of regulating urban sculpture development. As preference was always put on governmental guidance and regulation, ignorance rose on overly consuming land, raw material and other non-renewable resources in favour of urban sculptures development. It is advised that in a long run drafting work on urban sculpture development plan is supposed to divert its emphasis gradually on to such practice as area prioritisation, location verification, measurement control and so forth. By these means will the Chinese urban sculpture be pushed to walk on a sustainable way. It will be further proved that the urban sculptures will become an indispensable participant in the course of Chinese city and society development in a way of sustainability.

## Keywords

*Urban Sculpture; Planning; Sustainable Development*

## Introduction

As one of the direct consequence of decades of years fast growth in Chinese economic, social and culture sectors, urban sculptures have been in the sight of a number of Chinese mega cities functioning as a media in its identity publicity and as a carrier in bearing its unique cultural characteristic. It is unprecedented that the urban sculpture enterprise has been flourished in its history. It is apparent that this enterprise has made some achievement. Other than these, problems in consequence are also worth concern from us in that the fast growth by urban sculpture business inevitably brings problems same as those due to speedy urbanisation. Specific problems can be found in some cities of ugly in beauty, disharmonised with surrounding environment and ill-matched in colours led due to practitioners' ill-designing and hasty construction. Publicity's dissatisfaction alongside negative social impact arouses local governments' concerns in a high degree.

Up to date, a handful of Chinese city governments recognised scenarios as of defected artistic products existing in urban sculpture projects. They began to take their advantage in urban planning regulation and other technical capabilities to draw up the urban sculpture plan of their own. In 1999, the Shenzhen city government enacted its General Plan of Urban Sculptures within Shenzhen Economic Special Zone, the first-ever plan in urban sculpture regulation of sort in China. Following it up, Guangzhou City in 2002, Shenyang City in 2003 and Changsha City in 2004 consecutively promulgated its own urban sculpture-planning scheme. By the second decade of twenty-first century, it seems to become one of the parameters weighing up a city's urban artistic construction level whether a city has its urban sculpture plan.

Presently in China, the urban sculpture plan is generally drafted and edited concertedly by government-functioned departments, art administrative offices and designing firms. From the macro-perspective, they prop up implementing structural control, with taking into account of city's spatial configuration, its exclusive function and culture shape. It is always stated in the general plan that a city's overall sculpture layout shall be three-tiered: sculpture-dominated area, sculpture-scenic belt and sculpture-scenic spot. Taking the Hangzhou General Plan of Urban Sculptures as an instance, its major sculptures is designed to be located in the generally-known as the dual-axis area of the Yan'an Road axis and the axis of Tianmu Shan Road, the North Section of city loop road and Gen Shan Road; the three belt of the West-Lake-waterfront-ring belt, the Qiantang-river-front belt and the Grand-Canal-waterfront belt; the four zones of the Historical-culture-street Zone, the Special-commercial-street Zone, the tourist-Scenic Zone and the Education-industry Zone, and loads of scenic spots composing of

symbolic sculpture point, green land, squares, community centres and intersections. When taking a micro view of the sculpture planning, it is found that the nowadays the planning workers put much into the key factor control in that the GIS technology, the quality- and quantity-research method as well as positioning and demarcation tactics have been employed greatly aiming at imposing proper control and guidance on urban sculptures featuring specific shape with different points, lines and facets. General speaking, China's urban sculpture plan producing has been walking on a regulated and systematic road. It will be able to play a positive role in pushing forward the urban sculpture construction and management as long as its policies could be carried out effectively.

#### Urban Sculpture Planning Is Supposed To Be Diverted To A Sustainable Development Mode

We have to admit that outstanding achievement has made in our urban sculpture planning business on one hand, however we also need to identify problems generated accordingly, as it is a newly born baby we have ever had. Planning-wise, the concept of planning is fragmented, while the content is comparatively irregular. In some part of China, there also exist definition equivocality and content irregularity in urban sculpture planning, let alone positivity it may play to enhance China's urban sculpture undertakings a sound development. Crisis happens in planning draft and implementation in that the plan implementer is less power bound, while no law or bylaw embraces mandatory articles in planning employment. These directly result in incoherent of urban sculpture planning drafting from implementation. Consequently, these has become one of the hindrance stop the drafting work of Chinese urban sculpture planning from being further systematic and scientific. In some Chinese cities, the planning drafting workers are scant of respect to the law of art. Their disability in question bounds freedom from artistic creation. The last but not least, the shortsighted practice in urban sculpture planning drafting overvalues an immediate facelift in city appearance and its culture building. This nearsighted view makes the sculpture planning a driving force to a rapid increase in numbers of sculptures built at some regions. This practice fundamentally run against the long-term building nature borne by art construction. This is highly alert by policy-makers with China's construction authority. The planning making is bound

to comply with the law of art and take into account of public preference, particularly preventing planned construction projects from overcrowded and over-numbered. The core connotation of leaving sufficient room for a future sculpture building is simply a sustainable development mode.

Being a systematic conception, the sustainable development mode stresses that a social behaviour will be able to content the people of the time as well as not jeopardising our descendents ability to content their demand. It is thought to take a harmonious way to development by balancing up need from economy, society, population and resources. It is manifested today that the sustainable development conception has made enormous breakthrough in the sector of Chinese construction engineer, the concept of which is seldom aware of by those working for the urban sculptures. This is partly because in a city area, the number of its urban sculptures is far less than that of buildings or other infrastructure projects of kind. Social awareness is vague in spelling out consumption on non-renewable resources in the medium and later stage of any construction project. Solid evidence can also be noticed that Chinese urban sculpture works require more materials as they are generally bigger in size in comparison with that of kind constructed in west countries, that squares employed for holding sculptures are usually larger in China with such tragic ending occurrence as resettlement or dismantlement of sculptures as the square blocking urban traffic system from upgrading, and that Chinese people's preference on lighting up sculptures in the night time directly leads to high energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission. When it comes to every single sculpture in a Chinese mega-city, it may or may not consume a big lump of land, material and non-renewable resources. When taking a view at the unprecedented construction scale on urban sculptures in the whole country nowadays, people can visualise that the land and material used for sculptures and related projects is absolutely an impressively figure. By the end of 2006, Beijing as a single city has over 2,000 urban sculptures built already. In recent years, mega cities in China highlight a similar situation that is dense in urban population, short in natural resources and serious in environment contamination. Under such a circumstance, we suggest that every single social sector related to urban construction should prioritise the sustainable development mode. In response to such an advocate to build an ecological civilisation in China, we believe that the urban sculpture planning

work is bound to champion the sustainable development mode by taking advantage of being a planning administrator, diverting government endeavour from simply manipulating general affairs of the urban sculpture business.

#### **Drafting Principles For the Urban Sculpture Planning In Favour of the Sustainable Development Conception**

The working goals for urban sculpture undertakings under the sustainable development mode fall in consistent with those goals upheld by other social sectors, with its core content as making progress. The ultimate targets are to build sculptures orderly in pursuant to the inherent law of art, to leave room for our off-springs to build urban sculptures in their view on aesthetics, and to realise the intergenerational equity. The constructional projects should cut down consumption on land, building materials and other non-renewable resources in condition of meeting people's demand for appropriate social spiritual culture. The sustainable development mode will be able to carry on by means of making a good as preservation of our natural resources. In our viewpoints, an acceptable urban sculpture planning is thought to take employment of following techniques in leading this undertaking to a sustainable way.

#### ***An Overall-Regional-Oriented Planning Strategy May Prevent Redundant Sculpture Projects From Happening***

In the field of urban sculpture, redundant construction is regarded as urban sculptures with a resembled theme being reduplicated in a number of cities from the same region or a number of districts of the city attributed to their management bodies ill performance in planning. These redundant projects are absolutely a kind of waste in manpower and financial resources. It is limited and up to the local city government that takes care of the planning role in their individual urban sculpture programme, which already shows up resemblance characteristic to some extent. Most of the urban sculptures already built can be categorised into historical events, regional merits, contemporary features and other universal subjects in term of themes. Sculptures build under such a policy are unlikely to keep a long shelf time. Even worse, it may not leave space for extension for the sake of our descendents. Our solution to this problem comes at initiating interactive communications and consultations between neighbouring cities or between member cities with a city cluster. The regional planning scheme due

above its member cities may effectively avoid redundant urban sculpture construction from its source. Once the governmental administration body could be under control for a long term, a planning literature produced on this idea in question will become a sound interactive case by employing objective laws of art evolution into urban planning.

#### ***A Forward-Looking Perception In Site Identification May Avoid Sculptures Dismantled Or Relocated Later On***

The site identification is a critical point in procedure of a large-scale urban sculpture project demonstration. Some memorial sculptures are designed to be built up at sites bearing special meanings, such as original places where historical events happened and former residents by notable figures. Other than these, a majority of urban sculptures in consideration of their nature are erected in specific urban locations. Presently Chinese urban infrastructures are being transformed so fast that changes happen in a month if not in a day. Failure in site identification with forward-looking perception will lead to get newly built large-scale urban sculptures dismantled or relocated. This will not only cost too much amount of manpower and materials, but put a city's normal working and living order at risk. In China's Wuhan City in Hubei Province, there is an accident happened in transporting a giant sculpture to a new place. In the journey to the destination a part fell from the sculpture just hit a running bus attribute to a number of people wounded. It is proved necessary to have a forward-looking consideration in identifying the due site for sculpture. That simply design a sculpture to fit for the spatial form of its due erection place is far from enough. This rule is particularly workable to the site preparing to home a giant urban sculpture, which is too big to be removed. A desirable practice should also take different area's physical features, economic condition, demographical factors and traffic volume all into account, the non-lineage change on local economic values as well as its geometrical increase scale in particular. The scientific site identifying work guided by this idea will be conducive to prolong the physical and artistic life of every single piece of urban sculpture. This also demonstrates the economical principle in the sustainable development conception.

#### ***A Well Control on the Scale of Sculpture Will Avoid Waste of Natural Resources***

When not using to depict such reality objects as a figure, the size of urban sculpture is more often than

not weighing up factors of location's spatial dimensions, building budget, technical conditions and funders' subjective favourite. Decision always comes up with a compromise of all factors concerned. In China's undergoing demonstration process for urban sculptures, arbitrary decision on size of sculpture piece is commonly existed. Despite environmental conditions, Investors often subjectively come up with a certain figure as the height of sculpture as that numeric figure implies a special date. This behaviour distorting law of art will surely contribute to more land occupied, more metal and architectural stones consumed due to processing. This behaviour just runs against the principle of sustainable development. An appropriate urban sculpture planning is bound to take artists' advice broadly, to determine the scale of sculpture scientifically and objectively according to the due surrounding spatial features. As a whole, this rule for planning making should be adopted into the policy-making procedure as a rigid executive factor.

#### *To Take Measures Values the Objective Law of Art*

The biggest challenge in today's urban sculpture planning making is down to ignoring the inherent law of art or in other words the regularity of eminent urban sculpture instances, but turn to seeking reliance on rationales and data analysis methodology correlated with general urban planning under the influence of general social inclination. As a whole, the Chinese society is now in a stage of trying to catch up with developed countries in all walks of life. This expectation is comparatively simple to be realised in urban infrastructure renovation attempts thanks to popularity of modern designing ideas and building technologies. However, in the other hand, the software in favour of urban infrastructure construction, such as broad awareness of unique Chinese cultural essence, solid accretion on service of quality as well as time-honoured strong personal artistic capability, could be completed over a night. The urban sculpture system collectively representing a city's historic, artistic and humanity characteristics cannot be created without leading by a most outstanding master artist. A talent artist can only be fostered to be a prominent master following generations of artists' accumulation in art study. A tight free working environment, especially a sufficient time frame, is another indispensable condition to reach in propping up such a prominent figure for his creative work. When mentioning a proper time frame for urban sculptures producing, we

may take a view on several scores of representative works worldwide. The Peter the Great Monument sited in St. Petersburg, Russia, took twelve years (1766-1778) from designing and finally casting. It was eventually unveiled for public in 1782. Interestingly, American artist Gutzon Borglum died in his seventy-four, eighteen years after his magnum opus "Mount Rushmore National Memorial" started to build. It was his son Lincoln who finally got father's work done. Coming back to our fast-developing China now, most urban sculptures projects are requested to finish within one office term of our local leaders or within one five-year social economic development plan (commonly one to two years' time). Undoubtedly, this time span helps anything but masterpiece. Our urban sculpture planning is bound to abandon short-term act but rolling out its working in long-term perspective. Such a helpful practice will rightly avoid more completed sculptures being destroyed unnaturally and will be able to guarantee the piece of art its physical and art lifetime as long as it can be. In a changeable physical and humanity world only a long life piece of art is likely to get artistic charm spread out. As its artistic value getting rooted and fame being popularised, this masterpiece will be notable around the world in the end. Admittedly, this will be a time-consuming process. We do not rest on it being achieved in one or two generations because it requires a steady improvement of our people's quality in culture, an outcome can only be brought on through a booming economy and an affluent living standard.

#### Conclusions

The contemporary urban sculpture work gets its scale increasingly large, a size close to a building. It also expands itself into social system, urban transporting system and sub-system of natural resources. This in return arouses concerns whether it can practise a sustainable development mode. Although employment of system designing idea and life-cycle designing method will help realise sustainable development, the most critical issue is thought to be resolved in the beginning stage of scheme demonstration through planning measures. Finally, we believe that planning is an effectively measure in realising a sustainable development in urban sculpture undertakings. This is an organic component in China's city development mode of sustainability. It will finally underpin the art development and be good to our human beings.

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